

Amendments to the Specification:

On page 1, line 12, replace the entire paragraph with the following replacement paragraph:

Moreover [A. S. Holmes et al., "Applied Optics", 1/9/1993, vol.32, n.25, ~~page.4916-4912~~pages 4916-4921], silica films find applications as antireflexion and as planar wave-guides, or even as host material for active dopants for nonlinear optic as well as optical sensing applications.

On page 3, line 24, replace the entire paragraph with the following replacement paragraph:

- Italian patent application n. NO 98 A ~~[[00004]]~~000004 describes a sol-gel process for the preparation of thick films of silicon-dioxide that improves the well-known procedure by the addition of a certain quantity of fumed silica to the hydrolysis product of silicon alkoxide.